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Baby-Led Breastfeeding

- Place baby against the chest heart to heart and skin to skin
- Start with a calm and relaxed baby
- Keep the baby calm by finger sucking and gently rubbing baby's back if necessary
- Talk to the baby and keep him/her calm
- Relax and enjoy being together in baby time
- Wait for the baby to begin the search for the breast
- Baby leads – Mother helps
- Baby's hips, neck and shoulders need to be secure
- Baby's head needs to be free so he can use his cheeks to find the breast
- Baby uses his cheeks and chin to find the breast by feeling not by sight
- Some babies:
 - Twist their body toward the breast
 - Some babies will bob or bounce toward the breast using the cheeks, hands and chin
 - Some will gently fall toward the breast or scoot down to the breast
 - Some babies will throw themselves toward the breast or bounce
 - They root until the nose is sniffing the nipple
 - The chin and lower lip need to be firmly touching the breast
 - The baby tilts the head back and opens the mouth wider and reaches the upper lip up and over the nipple to grasp the nipple and begin sucking.
- If it is not comfortable, then take the baby off by putting a finger in the corner of the baby's mouth to break the suction.
- Lift the baby to the chest and try again

This handout is based on Baby-Led Breastfeeding- The Mother-Baby Dance DVD by Christina Smillie, MD available at:
<http://www.cuttingedgepress.net/cep/proddetail.asp?prod=vtBabyLedBreastfeedingMotherBabyDanceDVD>